

Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28) said that New York State's multi-million dollar request for high speed rail improvements across the upstate has the potential to bring a range of benefits to residents and businesses. The announcement came as Governor Paterson officially submitted a detailed package of rail improvement projects to the Federal Rail Administration.

The plan includes crucial funding for improving existing track and building a third track dedicated to a high speed passenger rail line. In total, New York State is requesting \$564.8 million of federal stimulus funds including \$48.6 million for the design and construction of high-level platforms and track realignment at the Rochester passenger rail station to accommodate high-speed rail.

It also includes \$32.1 million for signal improvements along Niagara branch tracks, which run from Buffalo to Niagara Falls, Erie County and \$22.4 million for rail infrastructure improvements required to relocate Amtrak's Niagara Falls passenger station on Lockport Road to the renovated 1863 Customs House, located near the Whirlpool Bridge on Whirlpool Street in Niagara Falls.

"Bringing high-speed rail to Upstate New York is one of my highest priorities," said Slaughter. "The improvement of existing tracks and the creation of a third track dedicated to passenger rail will allow people to move efficiently back and forth across the upstate region, improve commerce, generate new tourism opportunities and spark revitalization in our region for years to come. I am proud to have worked with Governor Paterson, Amtrak, CSX and especially my colleagues in the Upstate Congressional Caucus on this initiative. Western New Yorkers deserve reliable and fast transit options and this plan gets us on that path. Moreover, the construction of these new rail lines will create jobs and help stimulate the economy."

Slaughter's plan came about after she formed an upstate caucus last winter to help guarantee that a sizeable chunk of the rail improvement funding would go to the upstate region rather than New York City. Slaughter teamed with members of the caucus to secure Appropriations process and also through stimulus funds.

Over the last six months, Slaughter lead meetings with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Congressional leaders, representatives from Governor Paterson's office, the N.Y.

Department of Transportation, the Federal Railroad Administration, Amtrak, and CSX to bring high-speed rail to Upstate New York.

Funds specific to Western New York include:

- \$58.1 million for the final design and construction of an initial section of a dedicated third passenger track on the Empire Corridor in the Rochester area;
- \$48.6 million for the design and construction of high-level platforms and track realignment at the Rochester passenger rail station to accommodate high-speed rail;
- \$32.1 million for signal improvements along Niagara branch tracks, which run from Buffalo to Niagara Falls, Erie County;
- \$22.4 million for rail infrastructure improvements required to relocate Amtrak's Niagara Falls passenger station on Lockport Road to the renovated 1863 Customs House, located near the Whirlpool Bridge on Whirlpool Street in Niagara Falls;
- \$6.1 million for improving safety of highway/railroad grade crossings at 22 locations on the Empire Corridor from Erie County east to Schenectady County; and
- \$1.6 million for preliminary engineering of another section of a dedicated, third passenger track in Rochester.